

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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R 150818Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5676

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 12647

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, TH, CB

SUBJ: CAMBODIA

REF: A. STATE 150845; B. BANGKOK 12526; C. STATE 160406;
D. BANGKOK 12386; E. BANGKOK 12408

SUMMARY: I MET AUGUST 14 WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN, AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON ANAND PANARACHUN AND SECRETARY TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASA SARASIN WERE ALSO PRESENT. CHARTCHAI REAFFIRMED FULL RTG SUPPORT FOR THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT, BUT A WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE AND WORK WITH WHATEVER LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY MIGHT SUCCEED IT. ALL THREE STRONGLY URDED THAT WE CONSULT WITH THE RTG IN ADVANCE ABOUT ANY U.S. EFFORTS BEING MADE TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SO THAT THAILAND WILL NOT BE FACED WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI. END SUMMARY

1. I LAUNCHED THE SUBJECT OF CAMBODIA WITH CHARTCHAI BY MENTIONING THAT THE UPI REPORT DISCUSSED IN REFTELS B AND C WERE UNTRUE. I REITERATED OUR SUPPORT FOR THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT ALON THE LINES OF THE GUIDANCE IN REFTEL A. I SAID THAT WHILE WE WERE PREPARED TO WORK FOR A PEACFUL SETTLEMENT WE WERE ALSO GIVING ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO THE FORCES DEFENDING PHNOM PENH.

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I ADDED THAT THERE WAS NO DEADLINE ON OUR CONTINUING SHIPMENT OF

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT TO CAMBODIA.

2. ALTHOUGH I REFERRED TO THE MESSAGE THAT AMBASSADOR SWANK HAD CIRCULATED AMONG AMERICANS IN PHNOM PENH (PHNOM PENH 8420), I MENTIONED THAT WE WERE NEVERTHELESS SOMEWHAT ENCOURED ON THE MILITARY SIDE. THE PERIPHERY AROUND PHNOM PENH HAD BEEN ENLARGED, AND THE SUPPLY ROUTES WERE OPEN TO THE CAPITAL. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS INTERNAL DEBATE AMONG LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, WE ARE PRESSING ALL PARTIES TO WORK TOGETHER. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS WOULD BE A DISASTROUS TIME FOR A FALLING OUT AMONG THEM. CHARTCHAI RESPONDED THAT THE THAI DO NOT THINK THE KHMERROUGE WILL SEIZE PHNOM PENH. HE THEORIZED THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED THE POPULATION ANYWAY. IN CONCLUDING THIS PHASE OF THE DISCUSSION I POINTED OUT THAT THE CAMBODIANS WERE IN NEED OF TRAINED PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY PILOTS. I SAID THAT I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY MAY ASK BOTH THE RTG AND U.S. FOR ADDITIONAL HELP WITH TRAINING AND SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL; WE MAY BE DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS WITH THE SUPREME COMMAND.

3. CHARTCHAI THEN STATED THAT CAMBODIAN LEADERS WERE FEARFUL OF ALLEGED AMERICAN MOVES TOWARD SIHANOUK AND ASKED ABOUT RUMORS (PRESUMABLY COMING VIA THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA) OF SOME BEHIND-THE-SCENES PARLEYS TO ARRANGE FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SIHANOUK AS CHIEF OF STATE AND SIRIK MATAK AS PRIME MINISTER. I REPLIED THAT I HAD NO INFORMATION TO SUBSTANTIATE SUCH RUMORS. WHEN CHARTCHAI ASKED WHAT WOULD BE OUR REACTION TO SIHANOUK'S RETURN, I SAID I HAD NO OFFICIAL WORD ON THIS MATTER. IN MY PERSONAL VIEW, HOWEVER, IF A SOLUTION WERE WORKED OUT WITH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND ITS LEADERS IN WHICH THEY WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT SIHANOUK'S RETURN, THE U.S. WOULD PROBABLY GO ALONG.

4. IN REPLY TO AMBASSADOR ANAND'S QUESTION I REPLIED THAT I SURMISED THAT DR. KISSINGER'S TRIP TO PEKING WOULD BE A REGULAR FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH PRC LEADERS. I ASSUMED HE WOULD WISH TO IMPRESS ON THE CHINESE THE NECESSITY OF SUPPORTING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS AND NOT IN ANY WAY TO ENCOURAGE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO CONTINUE FIGHTING. I MENTIONED THAT HE WOULD ALSO PROBABLY BE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO ENCOURAGE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT FOR CAMBODIA. I THEN

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TURNED CHARTCHAI'S QUESTION AROUND AND ASKED WHAT THE RTG REACTION WOULD BE TO A GOVERNMENT HEADED BY SIHANOUK. CHARTCHAI REPLIED "OUR POLICY IS CLEAR." HE SAID, SUBSTANTIATING OUR COMMENT IN REFTEL D, THAT THE RTG WOULD ACCEPT OR RECOGNIZE ANY LEGAL GOVERNMENT IN CAMBODIA. CHARTCHAI ADDED THAT THE RTG SUPPORTED LON NOL AT THE PRESENT TIME, AND THAT IF THERE IS A CHANGE THE RTG WOULD RECOGNIZE THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

5. I THEN REFERRED TO PRESS STORIES ABOUT THAI CONTACTS WITH SIHANOUK'S GROUP IN CAIRO, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PEKING MEETINGS WITH SIHANOUK'S REPRESENTATIVES DURING THE CURRENT THAI BADMINTON AND PING PONG VISITS THERE. CHATCHAI WAS SOMEWHAT EVASIVE BUT IN THE END INSISTED THAT THE CAIRO STORY WAS PURE FABRICATION; HE PUT SOME RESPONSIBILITY ON THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN BANGKOK.

6. IN CONCLUDING, CHARCHAI REITERATED THAT THE RTG WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SIHANOUK. ASA SAID HE HOPED THAT THE RTG COULD BE TRULY CONSULTED RATHER THAN JUST INFORMED OF A FAIT ACCOMPLI. ANAND, IN REFERENCE TO JAPAN'S SURPRISE OVER U.S. OVERTURES TO PEKING, STRESSED THIS POINT BY SAYING THAT HE HOPED THAILAND COULD AVOID A "KISSINGER SHOCK."

7. COMMENT: AS WITH THE ISSUE OF U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND, I BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT WE TREAT THE RTG AS A GOOD ALLY WITH WHOM WE ENGAGE IN CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS THAT ARE OF DEEP CONCERN TO BOTH OF US. THUS I CONTINUE TO REQUIRE INSTRUCTIONS ENABLING ME TO TELL THE RTG WHATEVER CAN BE CONVEYED CONCERNING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FOR CAMBODIA AND ESPECIALLY THE U.S. ROLE.
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